

Career Q&A: Building a future-ready legal career in a digital world

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The University of Manchester

Technology is reshaping the legal landscape at a pace that's hard to ignore. Against this backdrop, The University of Manchester's LLM in International Commercial and Technology Law, a part-time online master's, offers a structured way to deepen expertise and stay ahead in a rapidly evolving field

Which technological shifts are creating the biggest challenges and opportunities for lawyers today?

Digital innovation is now embedded in everyday life. As Dr Joseph Lee Nazzini explains, "We are seeing the intersection of technology and commerce creating digital futures. For example, the use of generative AI, the utilisation of digital assets and digital trade, the proliferation of online platforms and virtual economies." These developments cut across borders and industries, creating legal questions that demand both technical understanding and commercial awareness.

For Dr Lee Nazzini, this means lawyers must "have the ability to identify the risks but also act as an enabler for realising social and economic goals."

How is the profession evolving, and what roles are emerging for tech-literate lawyers?

The career landscape is broadening. Graduates are moving into:

- ▶ Law firms advising on digital regulation, IP, AI and data protection
- ▶ In-house roles within multinational companies
- ▶ Government and regulatory agencies
- ▶ Public-sector roles
- ▶ International organisations
- ▶ Specialist areas such as AI law, digital asset law, intellectual property law, and data protection and privacy law

Students are already seeing the benefits. Recent graduate Mark Farrell shared, "My profile is now a lot more distinguished and in a highly competitive job industry, I feel that is vital to be able to stand out."

What does the LLM teach that traditional legal training often overlooks?

The course is designed to help students make sense of the legal questions raised by rapid technological change—an area that

conventional legal education often touches only lightly. It brings together fields such as AI, blockchain, digital trade, online privacy, defamation and data protection, and shows how these issues interact across sectors and jurisdictions rather than existing in isolation.

As Dr Lee Nazzini explains, "In this course, we will help our students to understand the value chains of different technologies to be used in different sectors." This practical grounding enables students to grasp not only the legal frameworks, but also the technological and commercial realities that shape them.

The programme also places strong emphasis on developing the ability to think critically about how the law should evolve in response to emerging technologies. As Dr Fiona Brimblecombe notes, it builds "original argumentation skills, being able to engage with a wide range of content and form your own views and opinions about what the law should be going forward."

Together, these elements give students a more applied, future-focused understanding of technology law than is typically offered in traditional legal training.

What makes Manchester's approach distinctive?

The course is taught by specialists who are deeply engaged in the field. As Dr Lee Nazzini puts it, "Our course is created by experts in this field who actively engage in their research, and we regularly engage with policymakers, with multinational companies, with the tech sectors, and also with the government agencies."

Students also benefit from a global cohort, which one described as "a really enriching experience in terms of learning about the different legal and regulatory approaches taken across the globe."

How does the online format support busy professionals?

Flexibility is central to the programme's design. Mark Farrell said the online method was "the only viable option for me to continue in further study," praising the short, interactive videos as "a real refreshing change from the more traditional lengthier lectures."

Senior Lawyer Hilda Wehbi echoed this, noting, "Balancing professional and personal commitments is not a simple task... However, the great thing about the courses in this LLM programme is that they are curated to support

individual learning as well as collaborative learning... The resources you need are available online, you have online recorded tutorials and course professors are quite accessible."

How quickly do students see the impact of the course in their work?

For many, the impact is immediate. Hilda Wehbi shared, "It certainly has given me a deeper understanding of the pertinent issues relating to emerging technologies and the interplay with existing legal frameworks... I feel more prepared to tackle emerging technological challenges and to support entities that I advise to mitigate these challenges in a more imaginative manner."

For Mark Farrell, the benefits have been career-shaping: "I have recently become a Data Protection Consultant, a move which I know has been aided by studying this area of law in depth and from perspectives of personal interest. I have also been offered the opportunity to join the Cambridge Centre for Alternative Finance as a part-time intern."

Who will benefit most from this LLM?

This LLM is designed for professionals working in law, compliance, data protection, governance and regulatory roles, as well as those progressing directly from undergraduate study. Its four core areas – corporations and technology, online privacy and data protection, financial law and fintech, and intellectual property in the digital environment – provide a clear structure for understanding how commercial law is evolving and where specialist expertise is needed.

Because the course is fully online and built for working professionals, students can continue advancing their careers while they study. Developed by scholars from the Manchester Law Department, it offers a research-driven curriculum and access to international expertise. Whether you want to deepen your academic foundations, progress professionally or strengthen your organisation's ability to respond to technological change, the programme equips you with the insight and skills needed to navigate complex legal and commercial developments with confidence.

Find out more about the University of Manchester's LLM in International Commercial and Technology Law on its website.

